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gradual attainment of holiness using concepts such as the hut, the desert, the mountain, the cave, the rock. In addition to being real space references, they are also symbols indicating a particular stage in the hermit's ascetic endeavour with more precision, and Teodosije uses them with fine, spiritually layered nuances of meaning.

Irena Špadijer's lucid analysis of the characters and their discourse in Teodosije's *Life of St Peter* brings to light the hagiographer's literary virtuosity and individuality. Certainly the most striking passages are those of Peter's exchange with the demons that tempt him. They are a consummate example of the ability of literature to describe the abysses and dark alleys of the human soul, to point to the measure of human weakness and the limits of human endurance, but also to the possibility of conquering evil. Such a powerful literary rendition is what distinguishes the Koriša hermit's biography from similar eremitic hagiographies of the Orthodox world and, as Irena Špadijer puts it, makes it transcend its time.

The discussion part of the book ends with the chapter devoted to the attempt to establish dates both for St Peter of Koriša and for his biographer, Teodosije of Hilandar ("Issues of chronology"). The Koriša hermit has hitherto been roughly placed in the twelfth/thirteenth century based on various criteria and arguments. Irena Špadijer relies on her philological examination and

on the analysis of the oldest surviving frescoes in Peter's hermitage to push the life of the Koriša hermit further back into the past, sometime at the end of the twelfth century. As for Teodosije of Hilandar, she proposes the view that the writer flourished in the last decades of the thirteenth century. This view seems to be gaining ground even though the question of arguments for dating remains a matter of controversy: unlike the widely accepted arguments that rest on the analysis of the manuscript tradition, the relevance of certain events and historical context in establishing chronology has been, and apparently will continue to be, the subject of an interesting and inspiring debate.

Irena Špadijer's book is one of those works that will be of enduring relevance and inspiration to researchers. Not only because it addresses some of the big and exciting topics of Old Serbian literature in particular and medieval studies in general, but also because it is exemplary for the thoroughness and scrupulousness of the research method applied. In that sense, it has already provided many of us with a number of firm points of references. But this book has yet another quality, quite rare nowadays, which I feel obliged to mention with particular appreciation. Written with an evident literary talent, a distinctive sensibility and reflectiveness, the book is read with great enjoyment and inner engagement.

ELENA DANA PRIOTEASA, *MEDIEVAL WALL PAINTINGS IN TRANSYLVANIAN ORTHODOX CHURCHES: ICONOGRAPHIC SUBJECTS IN HISTORICAL CONTEXT*. BUCHAREST: EDITURA ACADEMIEI; CLUJ-NAPOCA: MEGA, 2016, 376 p., 139 ill.

Reviewed by Jovana Kolundžija*

Elena Dana Prioteasa of the Institute of Archaeology and History of Art in Cluj-Napoca, Romania, focuses her research on iconography and medieval painting in Transylvania. It may be interesting to note

that, after a career as a medical doctor and specialist in laboratory medicine, she enrolled in the studies of Art History at the

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“Babeş-Bolyai” University in Cluj-Napoca, from which she received her BA and MA degrees, earning her PhD degree (2012) from the Department of Medieval Studies of the Central European University in Budapest. The book reviewed here, *Medieval Wall Paintings in Transylvanian Orthodox Churches*, is a part of her doctoral dissertation and it is about how particular wall paintings reflect the social, political and religious situation of Orthodox Christians in one part of the Hungarian kingdom in medieval times. Apart from an introduction, eight chapters and a conclusion, it contains a catalogue of churches, a list of abbreviations, a bibliography, a map, an index and 139 illustrations of very good quality.

The medieval wall painting of Transylvanian Orthodox churches has a rich history of previous research published both in general studies and in articles devoted to individual monuments. The main authors who have dealt with the paintings in different ways are Ion D. Ştefănescu, Virgil Vătăşianu, Vasile Drăguţ, and Marius Porumb. Ştefănescu has researched the iconography, style and technique of wall painting in many medieval Transylvanian churches in a book devoted to religious painting in Wallachia and Transylvania up to the nineteenth century. There are many studies discussing particular Transylvanian churches, the most prolific authors being Vasile Drăguţ and Ecaterina Cincheza-Buculei.

All the paintings discussed in this book date from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries and are fragmentarily preserved. As Elena Dana Prioteasa says, “many are still in a poor state of conservation or partially uncovered”, and “they contain Slavonic inscriptions and display a variety of styles: Gothic, Palaiologan, and a category that combines the Byzantine tradition with some Western influences as many others in this area at that time”.

Elena Dana Prioteasa chose to focus her attention on the wall painting of eight churches: the church of St. George in

Streisângeorgiu (Hu. Sztrigyszentgyörgy); the church of the Dormition of the Virgin in Strei (Hu. Zeykfalva); the church of St. Nicholas in Densuş (Hu. Demsus); the church of St. Nicholas in Leşnic (Hu. Lesnyek/Lesnek); the Reformed church in Sântămăria Orlea (Hu. Óraljaboldogfalva); the church of the Dormition of the Virgin in Crişcior (Hu. Kristyör); the church of St. Nicholas in Ribiţa (Hu. Ribice); and the church of the Dormition of the Virgin in Hălmagiu (Hu. Nagyhalmagy). In medieval times, these churches were situated in two neighbouring counties: Hunyad, in the Transylvanian voivodate, and Zaránd. The subject matter of the paintings selected for research is interpreted in relation to their social, political, and religious context.

The first chapter, “The social, political and religious life of the Romanians in late medieval Hungary” is devoted to the fourteenth- and fifteenth-century history of both Christian Churches, the Latin and the Orthodox, and the Romanian elite. The population of Hungary at the time was diverse in terms of ethnic origin and religious affiliation (Romanians, Germans, Slavs). Most Romanians lived in rural areas and their leaders, known as *kenezii* and *voivodes*, had judicial, administrative and military attributes. The second chapter, “Historical data on the researched churches and their donors” is concerned with links between particular details of wall paintings and the patrons of churches. Based on the painted portraits it is possible to identify the rulers and the time they lived in as well as the places. The chapter “Lay portraits and inscriptions” approaches each of the eight churches dealt with in the book to analyze the inscriptions and the lay portraits, provides information on the history of the church, the social and financial status of the patrons and their spiritual aspirations. In all of those paintings, the portrait of the donor is incorporated into a votive composition which depicts the donor presenting the model of the church to the patron saint, or individuals are depicted

separately, usually in a posture of prayer. The fourth chapter, "The military saints", is concerned with the portraits of holy warriors, because of their prominent presence in Transylvanian Orthodox churches. They are accorded an important, sometimes unusual, place in the church, such as the sanctuary or the upper register in the nave. Their depictions or scenes include St. George fighting the dragon, St. Theodor Tyron, St. Theodor Stratelates, St. Demetrius and Theodore.

The following chapter, "The holy kings of Hungary", focuses on the portraits of three holy kings of Hungary (Stephen, Emeric and Ladislas) painted in two medieval churches: the church of the Dormition of the Virgin in Crişcior, and the church of St. Nicholas in Ribiţa. The chapter on "The Exaltation of the Holy Cross" describes in detail the wall paintings in the churches in Crişcior and Ribiţa, and deals in particular with the depictions of St. Constantine and Helena in the iconography of the West and the East, or medieval Hungary. The cult of Sts Constantine and Helena was widespread in the middle ages because Constantine was celebrated as the first Christian ruler and founder of a Christian state.

The seventh chapter, "Orthodoxy of Faith, the Greek Rite, and the Latin Church in the Paintings at Hălmaġiu and Ribiţa", focuses on iconography in the churches at

Hălmaġiu and Ribiţa. The iconographic programmes of the two churches are similar, the only significant difference being observable on the south wall of their sanctuaries. Those paintings are expressive of adherence to Eastern liturgy and emphasize the orthodoxy of its theological content. The last chapter, "Saints Bartholomew and Thomas in the churches at Hălmaġiu and Densuş", discusses differences in the representation of the two saints in Western and Byzantine iconography, and looks at the manner in which they were depicted in medieval Hungary.

The book *Medieval Wall Paintings in Transylvanian Orthodox Churches* is very relevant for understanding the medieval culture of that part of Europe. Some iconographic motifs occurring in the churches under study have been interpreted in their social, political and religious context. The paintings have been regarded as a means of communication whose messages can be understood to the extent in which their historical background can be reconstructed.

A particular quality of this book rests in its excellent colour photographs, which are a precious source for all historians, and historians of art and literature interested in this period of the medieval past. The book is written in a simple style which makes it accessible even to a wider public.

THE OXFORD HANDBOOK OF THE HISTORY OF NATIONALISM, ED. JOHN BREUILLY.
OXFORD: OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS, 2013, xli + 775 p.

Reviewed by Dušan Fundić*

The Oxford Handbook of the History of Nationalism edited by John Breuilly, Professor of Nationalism and Ethnicity at the London School of Economics and Political Science, assembles texts by 35 contributors, offering a global overview of the history of the

phenomenon.¹ It examines many aspects of nationalism in terms of ideas, sentiments

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¹ Since his *Nationalism and State* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press and Manchester: